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Hawthorne's auditory imagery

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Hawthorne's Auditory Imagery

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CHAPTER I.

Hawthorne's Use of Auditory Imagery

There are certain images and themes in the fiction of Nathaniel Hawthorne which recur consistently enough to suggest design and purpose. And while a great deal has been written concerning Hawthorne's use of visual imagery, very little has been done with his auditory or sound imagery.[1] Hawthorne's auditory imagery, while a minor artistic device, is quantitatively significant and weaves an interesting pattern throughout both the short stories and the novels--a pattern which contains a multiplicity of sounds and forms an almost continuous background of sound in Hawthorne's fiction.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of Hawthorne's auditory imagery is its function. In both the short stories and the novels, the auditory imagery represents a character's relationship to the universe. But the function of the auditory imagery can best be illustrated

[1]The only study that deals with Hawthorne's sound images is Leland Schubert's Hawthorne, the Artist: Fine Art Devices in Fiction (New York, 1963). Mr. Schubert examines a few of the sound images in several of the tales with reference to the novels, but finds Hawthorne's sound images usually unrelated and concludes that Hawthorne's auditory imagination may have been weak. And while the evidence indicates otherwise, it should be noted that Mr. Schubert was concerned with much more than simply Hawthorne's auditory imagery. Furthermore, he clearly indicates that his major concern was with forms, not function.

by first examining what we know of Hawthorne's musical knowledge, the kinds of images he uses, and the style of those images. Concentrating on the major short stories and novels, with only occasional reference to the notebooks, expository writings, and unfinished romances, we find that Hawthorne's auditory images do constitute a rather consistent and important pattern.

Although Hawthorne always expressed an inability to appreciate music, he was, nevertheless, always fascinated by sounds, and his fiction, as well as the notebooks, is filled with vivid auditory backgrounds. At times, his music is so successful that it has led Mr. Schubert to conclude: "very few writers and not many musicians could compose such music."

It seems unlikely, however, that Hawthorne developed his musical knowledge by attending concerts. Indeed, there is only one recorded incident of Hawthorne's attendance at a concert: it was an oratorio performed by the Handel Society of Salem in 1820.[2] He is interested, though, in the vagabond musicians who strolled the streets in both America and the continent, for there are several passages in the

[2]Randall Stewart, Nathaniel Hawthorne (New Haven Haven: Yale University, 1948), p. 7.

notebooks which indicate he would pause and listen to them. But they were usually of inferior quality and Hawthorne recorded, on one occasion, "even my unmusical ear can distinguish more discord than harmony."[3] He also expressed an inability to distinguish between "Hail Columbia" and "Yankee Doodle,"[4] but the tone and context of the remark indicate he was more facetious than serious at the time. It is of little consequence, however, since the sound effects he achieves in his fiction are so diversified and so well orchestrated that one is unwilling to accept Hawthorne's disclaimer as the last word.

Indeed, Hawthorne's successful use of sound effects in his fiction indicates his awareness of the dramatic and psychological possibilities of certain groups of sounds. And he would certainly have had the intelligent man's knowledge of the theorizing about music--often relating to literature--that took place during the Romantic Period. Since an emphasis was placed upon music in the literary

[3] The English Notebooks of Nathaniel Hawthorne, ed. Randall Stewart (New York, 1941), p. 63.

[4] Ibid., p. 12.

discussions of the day, it seems Hawthorne would be aware of certain basic concepts relating to music. His emphasis on and use of harsh sounds for dramatic effect suggest a Romantic influence, as does his use of dynamic sounds, dramatically loud and quiet sounds.[5] And it is possible to see some parallels between Hawthorne's use of auditory imagery and conventional symphonic structure. The strikingly climactic pattern of sound in "Young Goodman Brown," for example, reminds one critic of the last movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.[6]

Furthermore, the almost continuous background of sounds in his short stories and novels may be relevant to the notion of a continuum of melody, a musical line. Certainly Hawthorne used the "motto" theme--a recurring phrase or musical theme usually alluding to a specific idea--in the murmuring of Maule's well, the tunes of Alice Pyncheon's harpsichord, and Phoebe's "light and airy strains" in The House of the Seven

[5]I mention possible Romantic influences here only as possibilities and not to establish a definite relationship between Hawthorne's auditory imagery and Romantic music. It may be an area worth exploring by some future Hawthorne student.

[6]Schubert, p. 117.

Gables. It is also revealed in the laughter of the three citizens Robin meets in "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," in Dimmesdale's "broken" voice in The Scarlet Letter, and in Hilda's "slender" voice in The Marble Faun.

But more important than any Romantic influence is Hawthorne's interest in and development of the ancient and medieval concept of harmony--the notion of the music of the spheres and of man's need to "harmonize" with the universe.[7] Hawthorne's concept of harmony symbolizes man's attunement with nature, including human nature, and contains two main ideas: harmony in the universe and harmony among men. The former, at best, is perfect harmony, and as such, is inaudible to human ears. The latter is the harmony which results when men interact within the bond of brotherhood in a responsible manner. The sounds descriptive of man, whether natural or human, are audible and can be pretty or ugly depending upon the degree of the character's attunement. The harmony of

[7]Hawthorne used the term "harmony" in its broadest literary sense to mean pleasant and congruent sounds. He used "dissonant" also in its broadest sense to mean discordant, incongruous, and disharmonious sounds. Whenever I use these terms, I have these definitions in mind.

the universe, though, is more important than harmony among men. And whenever man violates the harmony of the universe, which he may do by first violating the harmony of the bond of brotherhood, the disruption is described in dissonant sounds.

All of Hawthorne's auditory images, whether dissonant or dulcet, derive from two sources--man and nature. Those sounds which are solely characteristic of nature, such as the rustling of leaves, the splashing of streams, the rippling of brooks, the plashing of fountains, the chirping of birds, and so on, are often more harmonious than the images surrounding man, for man by nature is "noisy." Hawthorne best expresses his criticism of man's noisy nature by criticizing man's speech in a passage from his notebooks, written shortly before arriving at Brook Farm in April, 1841: "articulate words are a harsh clamor and dissonance. When man arrives at his highest perfection, he will again be dumb! for I suppose he was dumb at the Creation, and must go round an entire circle in order to return to that blessed state." Some nine years later, he developed the idea that human language was often more harsh and less meaningful than that of the sounds of nature:

"language,--human language [notice the qualification] ,--after all, is but little better than the croak and crackle of fowls and other utterances of brute nature,--sometimes not so adequate."[8] Kenyon, in The Marble Faun, criticizes human language for its inability to express spiritual insight as he and Donatello watch a twilight pastoral scene from the owl tower. "It is a great mistake," muses the sculptor, "to try to put our best thoughts into Human language. When we ascend into the higher regions of emotion and spiritual enjoyment, they are only expressible by such grand hieroglyphics as these around us" (pp. 738-739).[9]

Throughout the notebooks, moreover, there is reference after reference to the pleasing and dulcet sounds he observed in nature. He is forever recording, in some detail, the "pleasant buzz" of insects; concerts played by frogs; choirs of birds singing softly; the murmuring

[8]Nathaniel Hawthorne, The American Notebooks, ed. Randall Stewart (New Haven, 1932), pp. 226, 390.

[9]Citations from Hawthorne in my text, unless otherwise indicated, are to The Complete Novels and Selected Tales of Nathaniel Hawthorne, ed. Norman Holmes Pearson (New York, 1937).

of streams; and the note of the cuckoo:

> 'Cuck-oo--Cuck-oo' he says, repeating the word twice, not in a brilliant, metallic tone, but low and flute-like, without the excessive sweetness of the flute--without an excess of saccharine juice in the sound . . . the note is very soft and pleasant.[10]

Or he will note the "sound of the wind among the trees round the house; and, when that is silent, the calm, full, distant voice of the river. A sort of quiet seems to be diffused over the whole."[11]

Likewise, in his fiction, Hawthorne finds nature usually more harmonious than man. Coverdale, in The Blithedale Romance, for example, reposing in his hermitage, muses over his pastoral nook: "It was an admirable place to make verse, tuning the rhythm to the breezy symphony that so often stirred among the vine-leaves . . . in which the many tongues of Nature whispered mysteries, and seemed to ask only a little stronger puff of wind to speak out the solution of its riddle" (p. 497).

[10] English Notebooks, p. 116.

[11] American Notebooks, p. 48.

The entire first part of The Marble Faun contains a wealth of harmonious sound imagery representative of the Arcadian or Etruscan period which Donatello thrives in prior to his expulsion from the Eden-like wood. We are always hearing "the pleasant murmur, the gurgle, the plash!" of fountains, a favorite Hawthornian sound image, "which makes the quiet and silence more appreciable" (p. 631). The pleasant sounds of leaves rustling together float through the air in The Blithedale Romance and "Rappaccini's Daughter." We hear butterflies softly winging their way from flower to flower. We hear all these separately, then together, as Hawthorne varies the intensity from scene to scene. We hear the elm, in The House of the Seven Gables, make "a pleasant, cheerful, sunny sigh, responsive to the breeze that was elsewhere imperceptible; a swarm of insects buzzed merrily under its drooping shadow . . . . A locust sang, once or twice, in some inscrutable seclusion of the tree; and a solitary little bird, with plumage of pale gold, came and hovered about Alice's Posies" (p. 417). And we hear "the sigh of a summer wind among rustling boughs," in The Blithedale Romance.

But often Hawthorne's sound imagery is dissonant.

Throughout both the novels and the short stories, the auditory imagery abounds with harsh and cacophonous sounds. These sounds are the author's verbal expressions of nature's anguished reaction joined with other men's reactions, to man's sin. The types of images used to convey this disapprobation are boundless. They run the gamut from roaring winds, howling beasts, shrieks, yells, cries, lamentations, threnodies, Indian calls, howling, screaming, and the rattling of chains to the less horrible but still ominously dissonant sounds of creaking trees, croaking owls, laughing forests, and so on. The effect of so many dissonant sounds is to demonstrate that nature is issuing these sounds--sounds which contain severe moral judgements. The reader might, understandably, wish to charge Hawthorne with what Ruskin called "the pathetic fallacy." On the surface, it does indeed appear Hawthorne is guilty of writing impassioned prose to credit nature with the emotions of human beings. But Hawthorne, while personifying nature, often embeds his treatment of nature as human in the ambiguity device, rarely committing the "pathetic fallacy." At the end of "Young Goodman Brown," for example, Hawthorne subtly asks: "Had Goodman Brown

fallen asleep in the forest and only dreamed a wild dream of a witch-meeting?" (p. 1042). In "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," Hawthorne also uses the ambiguity device--in the form of a dream--to suggest that the story might have happened. At other times, he will use the subjunctive, as in The Scarlet Letter. Hawthorne relates that Hester's pain is great and any chastisement from the townspeople, or nature, would not increase it: "it could have caused her no deeper pain had [italics mine] the leaves of the trees whispered the dark story among themselves,--had the summer breeze murmured about it,--had the wintry blast shrieked it aloud!" (p. 134). At other times, Hawthorne uses such phrases as, "it seemed," "he imagined," "it appeared," "as if," "it seemed as though," "he thought that," and "it might have been," to indicate he is not verifying the event, but simply relating it. By relying upon the ambiguity device to explain the origin of his macabre sounds, Hawthorne maintains at once the psychological effect, the auditory backdrop of the story, and the necessary verisimilitude which makes the story in question both reasonable and enjoyable.

If Hawthorne finds more harmony in nature than

in man, he also realizes the necessity of harmony within the magnetic chain of humanity. Hawthorne feels that participation in society is necessary if men are to live together harmoniously. As we have seen, harmony in nature is usually customary; but harmony among men is not. Cities, for example, are usually much noisier than rural settings. Perhaps the most representative passage of the dissonance of city life is in The Blithedale Romance. Coverdale, after spending some months at Brook Farm, returns to the city, his ear somewhat unaccustomed to the magnitude and variety of sounds accumulated in a city.

> Whatever had been my taste for solitude and natural scenery, yet the thick, foggy, stifled element of cities, the entangled life of many men together, sordid as it was, and empty of the beautiful, took quite as strenuous a hold on my mind. I felt as if there could never be enough of it. Each characteristic sound was too suggestive to be passed over unnoticed. Beneath and around me, I heard the stir of the hotel; the loud voices of guests, landlord, or bar-keeper; steps echoing on the staircase; the ringing of a bell, announcing arrivals or departures; the porter lumbering past my door with baggage, which he thumped down upon the floors of neighboring

> chambers; the lighter feet of chamber-maids scudding along the passages;--it is ridiculous to think what an interest they had for me! From the street came the tumult of the pavements, pervading the whole house with a continual uproar, so broad and deep that only an unaccustomed ear would dwell upon it. A company of the city soldiery, with a full military band, marched in front of the hotel, invisible to me, but stirringly audible both by its foot-tramp and the clangor of its instruments. Once or twice all the city bells jangled together, announcing a fire, which brought out the engine-men and their machines, like an army with its artillery rushing to battle. Hour by hour the clocks in many steeples responded one to another. In some public hall, not a great way off, there seemed to be an exhibition of a mechanical diorama; for three times during the day occurred a repetition of obstreperous music, winding up with the rattle of imitative cannon and musketry, and a huge final explosion. Then ensued the applause of the spectators, with clap of hands and thump of sticks, and the energetic pounding of their heels. All this was just as valuable, in its way, as the sighing of the breeze among the birch-trees that overshadowed Eliot's pulpit. (Pp. 525-526).

These sounds are less dulcet and soothing than those sounds characteristic of nature. The choice of

nouns--stir, thump, tumult, uproar, clangor, rattle, applause, clap, and thump--is reinforced by the choice of verbs--stirring, echoing, ringing, lumbering, scudding, pounding. The sounds of these words are harsh, consisting of plosives and rattling consonant clusters, which, in themselves, create a dissonant pattern.[12]

Nevertheless, Hawthorne realizes, as expressed in the last line of the passage, that all this "noise" is valuable--valuable in the sense that it signals a panorama of life in which man is the musician, contributing his "tune" to the harsh symphony of life. This idea is repeated in a passage from The Marble Faun when a carnival is in progress:

> An organ-grinder at one point, and a clarion and a flute at another, accomplished what they could towards filling the wide space with tuneful noise. Their small uproar, however, was nearly

[12]Although the sounds of the words themselves are not the subject of this paper, I have discussed them here, on p. 21, and briefly in reference to "Young Goodman Brown," on p. 28 in order to show how the sounds of certain words complement and support the sounds those words describe. Other than these three instances, I deal exclusively with the sounds Hawthorne's words describe--in short, with his auditory imagery.

> drowned by the multitudinous voices of the people, bargaining, quarrelling, laughing, and babbling, copiously at random; for the briskness of the mountain atmosphere or some other cause, made everybody so loquacious, that more words were wasted in Perugia on this market day than the noisiest piazza of Rome would utter in a month . . . . It might seem irreverent to make the gray cathedral and the tall, time-worn palaces echo back the exuberant vociferation of the market; but they did so, and caused the sound to assume a kind of poetic rhythm. (p. 770.)

These, then, are the sounds of city life. They are healthy, if not altogether harmonious sounds, for they represent the interaction of society.

There are, however, certain aspects of city life Hawthorne finds particularly disturbing. Commercialism is offensive to him, and we can imagine his reaction to the harsh tones produced by the peddlars' instruments. In The House of the Seven Gables, for example, we hear a series of harsh sounds which herald the new day:

> The town appeared to be waking up. A baker's cart had already rattled through the street, chasing away the latest vestige of night's sanctity with the jingle-jangle of its dissonant bells. A milkman was distributing the contents of his

> cans from door to door; and the harsh peal of a fisherman's conch-shell was heard far off, around the corner. (P. 366.)

These sounds are particularly offensive to Clifford's aesthetic sensitivities. There are also other dissonant sounds which offend him. "The obstreperous howl of the steam-devil," has a disagreeable effect on him, as does the "hateful clamor" of the shop-bell. The scissors grinder's wheel, from "whence issued an intense and spiteful prolongation of a hiss as fierce as those emitted by Satan and his compeers in Pandemonium," repels him and yet has a kind of charm of its own, for it reminds him of his childhood. Clifford, like Hawthorne, is both repulsed and charmed by the various cacophonous sounds. He is caught on the horns of dilemma, though, and is unable to decide whether to commit suicide or join the "mighty river of life, massive in its tide, and black with mystery [which was] calling to the kindred depth within him; . . . both impulses might have wrought on him at once" (p. 342). Clifford's anguish stems mainly from his estrangement from "the surging stream of human sympathies." And if these sounds are confusing to him, there is one sound which

gives him a "yearning to renew the broken links of brotherhood": the sound of church bells.

> The church-bells, with various tones, but all in harmony, were calling out, and responding to one another--"It is the Sabbath!--The Sabbath!--Yea; the Sabbath!"--and over the whole city, the bells scattered the blessed sounds, now slowly, now with livelier joy, now one bell alone, now all the bells together, crying earnestly--"It is the Sabbath!"--and flinging their accents afar off, to melt into the air, and pervade it with the holy word.[13]

There is more "harmony" and joyful sound in the ringing of these bells than in any other passage. And it occurs exactly half-way through the novel, providing Clifford with a musical oasis in the midst of the dissonant city sounds. The intensity of feeling produced by these bells moves Clifford to confess: "it seems to me that I could pray once more."

Thus, the sounds of the city, while, perhaps, more harsh and irritating than the sounds of nature,

[13]Nathaniel Hawthorne, The House of the Seven Gables, Centenary Edition, eds. William Charvat, Roy Harvey Pearce, et al. (Columbus, Ohio, 1965), II, p. 167.

are pleasant to hear since they represent the harmony of city life, of men working and living together. "The muffled roar of the city," Hawthorne wrote in the English Notebooks, "is very soothing, and keeps one listening to it, somewhat as the flow of a river keeps us looking at it." He later sums up his auditory impression of London's bustling city life by referring to it as "that grand lullaby."[14]

But whether Hawthorne uses dissonant or dulcet sounds, ugly or pretty sounds, he is always conscious of the language he uses. He is a literary artist, imprinting his particular style--his individuality and his ideas--upon the language he uses. And language, after all, is obviously the material of the literary artist.

Hawthorne's use of language--his style--is consciously structured to create an effect, to evoke a feeling or a series of feelings in his reader. It is a style developed and shaped by

[14] English Notebooks, pp. 600-601

Hawthorne's peculiar arrangement of words, his choice of images, his use of certain conventional literary devices, and his punctuation.[15]

The above passage from The House of the Seven Gables is a good example of Hawthorne's use of punctuation to aid balance and continuity and rhythm. The pattern of sound is punctuated by commas, dashes, exclamation points, quotation marks, and semi-colons--punctuation which increases in number whenever Hawthorne is reaching a climax or a point of tension.

[15]Passages illustrating Hawthorne's punctuation in my text are from the Centenary Edition of The House of the Seven Gables. I have used this edition because it is the most accurate representation of Hawthorne's original manuscript. Since Hawthorne was probably "a rapid and far from accurate proof-reader," since printing houses invariably imposed their styles upon his manuscripts, and since The House of the Seven Gables is printed from the extant authorial manuscript rather than from a first edition, the Centenary Edition reflects most accurately his intentions. Further, I have chosen only those passages for which there are no recorded variants, thereby avoiding duplication of any but Hawthorne's original punctuation. Since the Centenary Edition has published only four of Hawthorne's novels--Fanshaw, The Blithedale Romance, The House of the Seven Gables, and The Scarlet Letter--and none of the short stories, the examples provided here are only representative of a small portion of Hawthorne's canon. Hence, some future Hawthorne student might find fertile ground pursuing this area. For a more detailed discussion concerning extant manuscripts and printing practices related to Hawthorne's works, as well as the approach followed in the Centenary Edition, see "Editorial Principles" in this edition, pp. 399-417.

Ordinarily, we associate pleasing sounds with longer phrases, displeasing sounds with shorter passages or phrases. With Hawthorne's treatment of these bells, however, the reverse is true. The phrases preceding the quote are longer and the phrases toward the end of the quote lengthen out. The two sentences preceding the first "It is the Sabbath!" contain, respectively, six and eight words or eight and twelve syllables, on the average, between punctuation marks. Between the first and last "It is the Sabbath!", however, there is an average of only four words or six syllables between punctuation marks. The final sentence of the passage contains seven words or nine syllables between punctuation marks. Thus, the kernel of the passage--the section between the first and last "It is the Sabbath!"--achieves an abrupt sound sequence. Furthermore, the dashes, exclamation points, and quotation marks are used only around this section. Interestingly enough, the 1883 edition of Hawthorne's works omits the comma after the phrase "whole city" and adds a comma before the dash preceding the final "It is the Sabbath!"

The chief word in the passage, of course, is "Sabbath," and the first syllable of this word is the only stressed syllable in the quoted line, with the

exception of the one "Yea." It is a word deliberately chosen for its rhythm. By choosing a word with a very soft plosive, Hawthorne gets the effect of striking, but of soft striking. The rhythm of this word, coupled with the rhythm produced by the punctuation, creates the image of several bells striking together, as Hawthorne says, in "harmony." He clearly intended the passage to be a point of happiness (cf. p. 55).

Hawthorne, moreover, can begin with a sound--the church-bells, for example, develop it--"with various tones, but all in harmony, were calling out, and responding to one another"--build upon it--"It is the Sabbath! The Sabbath!--Yea; the Sabbath!"--refine it--"and over the whole city, the bells scattered the blessed sounds, now slowly, now with livelier joy, now one bell alone, now all the bells together"--and achieve exactly the effect he wishes. The process is much like composing. At times, he combines a series of sounds with semi-colons and commas. The semi-colons suggest a longer pause between sounds; the commas, a shorter pause. The sound sequence which occurs during Judge Pyncheon's death further illustrates this. We first hear three

puffs of wind, their description punctuated by semi-colons and exclamation points. Next, we hear three successive sounds which are punctuated with periods. These periods create a much longer pause at the end of the sounds and prolong the effect: "A rumbling kind of a bluster roars behind the fire-board. A door has slammed above-stairs. A window, perhaps, has been left open, or else is driven in by an unruly gust." The sequence ends with a series of sounds punctuated by commas, semi-colons and exclamation points. Noises begin

> to sing, and sigh, and sob, and shriek--and to smite with sledge-hammers, airy, but ponderous, in some distant chamber--and to tread along the entries as with stately footsteps, and rustle up and down the staircase, as with silks miraculously stiff--whenever the gale catches the house with a window open, and gets fairly into it . . . . It is too awful! This clamor of the wind through the lonely house; the Judge's quietude, as he sits invisible; and that pertinacious ticking of his watch![16]

In addition to his use of punctuation to aid in

[16]Centenary Edition, The House of the Seven Gables, pp. 227-278.

the development and refinement of an auditory image, Hawthorne uses the conventional similes and metaphors to create, compare or contrast sounds. He also uses more complex techniques of personification, repetition, and contrast. Furthermore, Hawthorne's auditory imagery, because it appeals to the sense of hearing, is "tied" imagery--imagery employed in such a way that it has nearly the same meaning and value for all readers. Tied imagery is the opposite of "free" imagery--imagery which is not limited by context and is, therefore, capable of having different meanings or values for different readers.

The particularity and concreteness of Hawthorne's sound images, their interpretation being limited by context, appeal to the sensory experiences of all readers. None of us has any difficulty hearing the hoof-beats and laughter in "Young Goodman Brown." We recognize the echoes, shouts, and organ notes whenever they strike our ears. We are familiar with the sounds of clapping and shouts of encore and the laughter which fill "Ethan Brand." We know what bells sound like. We know also the qualities of a whisper, a shriek, a scream. We have all heard, or have no trouble imagining, the whistling of the wind,

the rustling of leaves, the rumble of a mountain slide, the gurgling of fountains, and the babbling of a brook. We know the cooing of doves, the croaking of owls, and the howling of wild beasts. We know these different sounds and have no trouble hearing them. Thus, little or no interpretation of such sounds is necessary from one reader to another.

What is necessary, though, is to distinguish between the literal and figurative sound images Hawthorne uses. A figurative image is one which involves a "turn" on the literal meaning of the words described. Literal images are those images that involve no necessary change in or "turn" on the obvious meaning of the words, one in which the words call up a sensory representation of the literal object or sensation in question. There is a series of literal sound images which sets the tone of "The Ambitious Guest." In the first two paragraphs, we hear the roar of the fire in the hearth, the laughter of the children before it, and the stones which rumble down the mountainside. The sounds are literally those sounds described, no turn on the words is intended. Next we hear the children's laughter contrasted with the wind

> rattling the door, with a sound of wailing and lamentation, before it passed into the valley. For a moment it saddened them, though there was nothing unusual in the tones. But the family were glad again when they perceived that the latch was lifted by some traveler, whose footsteps had been unheard amid the dreary blast which heralded his approach, and wailed as he was entering, and went moaning away from the door. (P. 990).

Hawthorne's Gothic sound images are usually literal images. "The Hollow of the Three Hills," for example, contains such simple but highly effective literal images as voices, accents of prayers, echoes, howling winds, strange murmurings, shrieks, sweet female voices, wild roars of laughter, groanings, sobs, rattling chains, fierce and stern voices, love songs, and finally, funeral hymns. These are all sounds which the reader readily recognizes. No scene is made more vivid by literal imagery than that conjured up by the witch during the first of the three auditory revelations: "Voices were encompassed and reechoed by the walls of a chamber, the windows of which were rattling in the breeze; the regular vibration of a clock, the crackling of a fire, and the tinkling of the embers as they fell among the ashes, rendered the scene almost as vivid as if

painted to the eye" (p. 943). The louder sounds, in this instance, lead into the softer sounds of a vibrating clock, a crackling fire and tinkling embers. And there is a longer pause between the two sounds, indicated, as we have seen, by the semi-colon.

But not all of Hawthorne's images are literal images. At times, he uses figurative sound images--images which involve a "turn" on the literal meaning of the words. Catharine's discourse, for example, in "The Gentle Boy," is described as "a vague and incomprehensible rhapsody, which, however, seemed to spread its own atmosphere round the hearer's soul, and to move his feelings by some influence unconnected with the words. As she proceeded, beautiful but shadowy images would sometimes be seen, like bright things moving in a turbid river" (p. 898). The images, in this instance, are highly figurative images. In "Young Goodman Brown," following Brown's discovery of Faith's pink ribbon, Hawthorne relates: "The whole forest was peopled with frightful sounds--the creaking of trees, the howling of wild beasts, and the yell of Indians; while sometimes the wind tolled like a distant church bell, and sometimes

gave a broad roar around the traveller, as if all Nature were laughing him to scorn" (p. 1038). Here, the literal images of creaking trees, howling beasts, and yelling Indians are augmented by the more figurative images of the wind tolling like a bell and Nature laughing like a man. These are not simply similes, nor are they literal images; they are suggestive and figurative images which demand that the reader transfer the sounds he associates with one object--the bell, for instance--to another object which normally does not have the same association--the wind.

"It is a strange though familiar phenomenon of human nature," Stephen Brown writes, "that our inward life tends to project itself upon our surroundings, thence to be reflected back as though it came from without."[17] This "familiar phenomenon" may be expressed through personification--a device Hawthorne uses frequently throughout both the short stories and the novels. Hawthorne's nature expresses itself as easily as any human might. It can howl, scream, shriek, or laugh. And it can whisper, murmur,

[17] The World of Imagery (New York, 1966), p. 133.

and babble. There are sermons in stones and messages in brooks. But the way in which personification functions is most important and we will have a great deal to say about it below.

With an ear for sound, Hawthorne varies his use of personification as well as his use of repetition. By repeating certain sounds throughout a particular story, Hawthorne establishes a thread, as it were, which ties the story together and sets the tone or mood. There is a difference, for example, between the low and indistinct sounds in "Rappaccini's Daughter" and the rather intense and loud sounds in "Young Goodman Brown." In the former, such words as rustling, throbbing, gushing, sighing, and gurgling--repeated throughout the narrative--create a low and soft sound pattern. True, there are shrieks in the auditory pattern, but these are few and occur toward the end. For the most part, though, the sounds in "Rappaccini's Daughter" never reach the intensity of the sounds in "Young Goodman Brown." They are subdued and essentially quiet sounds, intended to give a subdued and quiet tone to the story. In "Young Goodman Brown," on the other hand, the action and the conflict are more dramatic and, hence, the sounds are

more intense. While there is murmuring and whispering, there is also loud laughter--intense and ominous laughter which permeates the story. There are also screaming, crying, clattering, tramping, shouting, roaring, creaking, and howling--sounds certainly more powerful and intense than those low and indistinct sounds in "Rappaccini's Daughter."

But the most extraordinary element of Hawthorne's style is his use of synaesthesia--imagery which translates from one sense into another. Welleck and Warren see the use of such imagery as the result of either "the poet's abnormal psychological constitution or of literary convention."[18] Schubert feels that Hawthorne "sees" sound. In a sense, both are correct, although Hawthorne can hardly be called "abnormal."

Hawthorne's use of synaesthesia places him squarely within his literary milieu. Part of the Romantic attitude consisted of a desire to see things and to see them whole. The Romantic writers envisioned an organic universe--a coherent, living unity. Theirs was basically a holistic view for they attempted to fuse the parts into a whole, to combine

[18] Theory of Literature, p. 187.

their senses. Hawthorne combines his senses in just such a way. He not only sees sound, he hears vision. In short, he is interested in creating in his fiction scenes which convey all the sensations the same scene would convey in life.

F. O. Matthiesson feels that one way Hawthorne captures his scenes is by using a "vocabulary of painting."[19] He also uses a vocabulary of sound. He gives color and shape to sound. While playing with his son Julian, for example, Hawthorne describes his son's voice drifting down to him as "a continual stream of babble . . . dripping down upon me like a summer shower."[20] Or, in the American Notebooks, he will muse: "If cities were built by the sound of music, then some edifices would appear to be constructed by grave, solemn tones,--others to have danced forth to light, fantastic airs." Later, while contemplating a series of sketches he would like to do, he asks: "Can the tolling of the Old South bell be painted?"[21]

[19] American Renaissance (New York, 1941), p. 299.

[20] Stewart relates this incident from an unpublished diary, "Twenty Days with Julian and Little Bunny," p. 105.

[21] The American Notebooks, pp. 209-238.

His description of Tennyson's voice in the English Notebooks is interesting. He had "a bass voice, but not of a resounding depth; a voice rather broken, as it were, and ragged about the edges, but pleasant to the ear."[22]

Similarly, the stories and novels contain an abundant use of synaesthetic images. Hepzibah's voice, in The House of the Seven Gables, contracts

> a kind of croak, which, when it once gets into the human throat, is as ineradicable as sin. In both sexes, occasionally, this life-long croak, accompanying each word of joy or sorrow, is one of the symptoms of a settled melancholy; and whenever it occurs, the whole history of misfortune is conveyed in its slightest accent. The effect is as if the voice had been dyed black; or,--if we must use a more moderate simile,--this miserable croak, running through all the variations of the voice, is like a black silken thread, on which the crystal beads of speech are strung, whence they take their hue. (P. 323.)

Here, the sense of sound is translated into the sense of color and form.

There are other instances. In "The Artist of the

[22]English Notebooks, p. 553.

Beautiful," we learn that one of Owen Warland's "most rational projects was to connect a musical operation with the machinery of his watches, so that all the harsh dissonances of life might be rendered tuneful, and each flitting moment fall into the abyss of the past in golden drops of harmony" (p. 1141). Beatrice's voice, in "Rappaccini's Daughter," is described as "rich as a tropical sunset," which "made Giovanni . . . think of deep hues of purple and crimson" (p. 1046). And it is Miriam, in The Marble Faun, who imagines that the strain of music coming from the panpipe during the sylvan dance is "like a gayly colored thread of silk." Donatello adds: "or like a chain of flowers" (p. 638).

Hawthorne also translates painting into sound. In the English Notebooks, for example, he records his admiration for a picture entitled "Evening Gun" by Danby. What particularly impressed him was the picture's realism, for it is so lifelike "and so effective that you can even hear the report, breaking upon the stillness with so grand a roar that it is almost like stillness too."[23] In another landscape

[23] English Notebooks, p. 550.

by Hunt, Hawthorne is able to hear the bleat of the lost sheep.

These examples of the kinds of auditory images Hawthorne uses and the style of those images are by no means exhaustive, but they are representative. We know how they work and we will recognize the different images as they occur. But the fullest appreciation of Hawthorne's sound images rests in the images themselves. And while form and style are important, it is the manner in which Hawthorne's sound imagery functions, which provides the reader with a new approach, a sign-post, a key not only to a better understanding of the imagery itself, but also to a better insight into theme. And it is the relationship of imagery to theme that makes imagery important.

CHAPTER II

The Function of Hawthorne's Auditory Imagery in the Short Stories

Most modern critics agree that imagery is seldom used simply for decorative purposes. Rather, it usually functions as the means by which experience in all its richness and complexity is communicated. It is an important portion of the meaning of a literary work, never a mere decoration. By examining image-clusters and patterns which recur consistently enough to suggest conscious or unconscious design, a key or sign-post is provided by which the reader is able to enjoy a better understanding of a literary work.

The most interesting function of Hawthorne's auditory imagery is its representation of a character's relationship to the universe. In a variety of instances, the auditory imagery is dissonant when the character is guilty of some sin, and hence "out of tune" with the universe. Conversely, when the character is "in tune" with the universe, the sound imagery is harmonious. Hawthorne's sound images are mostly those dissonant images which are representative of evil--as in "Ethan Brand" and "Young Goodman Brown." Seldom, however, is the sound imagery as totally dissonant as in these two stories. And seldom is it as

tightly woven.

The degree of cacophony which describes or represents a character depends upon his sin. The greater the sin, the more dissonant the sound images. If a character moves from a state of sin toward moral improvement or salvation, the sound images move from dissonance to harmony, as with Hepzibah and with Dimmesdale, for example. But when a character remains isolated from the chain of humanity, he is "out of tune" with both nature and human nature and the sounds remain unharmonious and harsh, as with Westervelt in The Blithedale Romance, Ethan Brand and Goodman Brown.

Hawthorne's auditory imagery functions in this way throughout both the short stories and the novels and it should be noted that the imagery does become more complex as the particular work becomes more complex. But the sound imagery performs the same function. Indeed, the consistency which exists between the short stories and the novels is marked, with the short stories providing a microcosm of the novels, in so far as the auditory imagery is concerned. Furthermore, the auditory images often function as a kind of "leitmotiv" suggestive of Wagnerian opera, where a phrase or two of music,

a special theme, is heard each time a particular character is to appear.[1] The harpsichord music representing Alice Pyncheon in The House of the Seven Gables is a case in point.

Two short stories which illustrate Hawthorne's use of auditory imagery to indicate man's estrangement from nature and humanity are "Ethan Brand" and "Young Goodman Brown." In both stories, Hawthorne contrasts the dissonant sounds representative of individual sin with the harmony of nature--a harmony which is disrupted by sin. Accordingly, when the character commits some sin, nature voices its disapproval in harsh tones.

In both cases, laughter--normally a wholesome expression--is treated as some evil and macabre expression of man's malignant nature, a "mask of evil," as it were.[2] It becomes a sort of oxymoron.

[1]Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, ed. Eric Blom (New York, 1954), defines "leitmotiv" as "a term invented by Hans von Wolzogen to mean a short figure of melody or progression of harmony (frequently the two in combination) of marked character, used to illustrate situations, personages, objects, and ideas essential in a story or drama," p. 121. It is similar to the "motto" theme and has its precedents in Berlioz' idee fixe and Weber's "theme of magic."

[2]Hyatt H. Waggoner uses this term in Hawthorne: A Critical Study (Cambridge, 1963), p. 59.

Hawthorne explains this laughter in "Ethan Brand:"

> Laughter, when out of place, mistimed, or bursting forth from a disordered state of feeling, may be the most terrible modulation of the human voice. The laughter of one asleep, even if it be a little child,--the madman's laugh,--the wild, screaming laugh of a born idiot,--are sounds that we sometimes tremble to hear, and would always willingly forget. Poets have imagined no utterance of fiends or hobgoblins so fearfully appropriate as a laugh. (P. 1187.)[3]

Indeed, throughout "Ethan Brand," laughter provides a backdrop against which Ethan's unpardonable sin is exhibited.

In the first paragraph, we hear the first of seven rolls of laughter.[4] The first is "a roar of laughter, not mirthful, but slow, and even solemn, like a wind shaking the boughs of the forest" (p. 1184). We hear it again when Bartram questions Ethan "with a laugh" (p. 1187). It is a nervous and uncertain laugh representative of Bartram's

[3]Citations from Hawthorne in my text, unless otherwise indicated, are to The Complete Novels and Selected Tales of Nathaniel Hawthorne, ed. Norman Holmes Pearson (New York, 1937).

[4]Leland Schubert notes this pattern in Hawthorne, the Artist (New York, 1963), pp. 116-117.

apprehension. Shortly later, Ethan breaks into "a laugh of scorn," and Hawthorne relates that "it was the same slow, heavy laugh, that had almost appalled the lime-burner when it heralded the wayfarer's approach. The solitary mountainside was made dismal by it" (p. 1187). The fourth laugh is that of the villagers, and is described as "the rough murmur of tongues." The villagers are "laughing boisterously, and mingling all their voices together in unceremonious talk" (p. 1189). The fifth laugh occurs after a pause of several pages, when we hear the villagers react to the dog's antics "with universal laughter, clapping of hands, and shouts of encore" (p. 1193). Ethan interrupts the "universal laughter" with his own "awful laugh, which, more than any other token, expressed the condition of his inward being. From that moment, the merriment of the party was at an end; they stood aghast, dreading lest the inauspicious sound should be reverberated around the horizon, and that mountain would thunder it to mountain, and so the horror be prolonged upon their ears" (p. 1193). The awfulness of Ethan's laughter is immediately contrasted with the quietness of the villagers, "whispering one to another that it was

late," and finally with the silence of the forest "holding its breath until some fearful thing should happen." It is a kind of symphonic climax which takes place, with the sounds building toward the thundering peal of Ethan's laughter, which is capable of being reverberated from mountain to mountain, followed by a tapering off of the sound imagery into a tense silence. The seventh, and final peal of laughter is "the sound of a fearful peal of laughter [which] rolled heavily through the sleep of the lime-burner and his little son" accompanied by "dim shapes of horror and anguish [which] haunted their dreams." This is Ethan's final laugh before plunging into the kiln. Thus, the sound imagery represents, through its dissonant tones, the "fiend" who has committed the unpardonable sin. He violated the sanctity of the human heart, and his heart

> had withered,--had contracted,--had hardened,--had perished! It had ceased to partake of the universal throb. He had lost his hold of the magnetic chain of humanity. He was no longer a brother-man, opening the chambers or the dungeons of our common nature by the key of holy sympathy, which gave him a right to share in all its secrets; he was now a cold observer, looking on mankind as the subject of his experiment, and, at length, converting man and woman to be his puppets. (P. 1194.)

Interestingly enough, once Ethan is gone, "the great

hills played a concert among themselves, each contributing a strain of airy sweetness" (p. 1196). Little Joe perhaps best expresses the reestablishment of the natural harmony when he joyfully observes "that strange man is gone, and the sky and the mountains all seem glad of it!" In this way, then, the horrible and unnatural dissonance of Ethan's laugh is vividly contrasted with the natural and harmonious silence of a personified nature. It is a harmonious silence in the sense that the music is too dulcet to hear. It has an "airy sweetness" reminiscent of the perfect harmony which resulted when, in the medieval concept of the Ptolemaic system, God tuned the seven spheres and the harmony created by the tuning was too perfect to be heard by human ears.

A further indication of nature's abhorrence of man's dark side can be found in "Young Goodman Brown," a tale in which "black anthems made nightly music."[5] Both the sounds of nature and those of man fuse to create a sensory and psychological background for

[5]Mark Van Doren, Nathaniel Hawthorne: A Critical Biography (New York, 1962), p. 77.

Goodman Brown's dream. Here as in "Ethan Brand," the sound pattern, when isolated, is rather interesting.[6] The first of the two-part pattern begins with Goody Cloyse screaming "The devil!" when she recognizes Goodman Brown's companion. This is followed by hoof-beats and voices, the elder's laughter, Brown's laughter, more hoof-beats, more voices, a woman's lamentation, the murmur of the forest, Brown's shout, the forest's echo, laughter, silence. At this point, Goodman Brown sees Faith's pink ribbon on the branch of a tree, and his anguished reaction begins the second sound pattern. With Brown's cry that "There is no good on earth; and sin is but a name," the sounds come quickly and dramatically. Brown, "maddened with despair . . . laughed loud and long." Next, as if in response, we hear the howling of wild beasts, the yell of Indians, distant church bells, nature's laughter at Brown, his laughter returned, his laughter again, setting "all the echoes of the forest laughing like demons around him," the swell of a hymn, the sounds of the benighted wilderness pealing in awful harmony together, Brown's shout, the hymn again,

[6]Schubert notes the pattern in a somewhat similar way, pp. 114-116.

followed by organ notes, the roaring wind, silence. Thus isolated, the auditory images compose a two-movement symphony, elaborately orchestrated. The sounds, while dissonant and ominous, blend together in an "awful harmony" that sets the tone of the story. Furthermore, the cacophony is augmented by rhythm. There is statement, development, variation and restatement. The sounds begin slowly and quietly, but soon rise to a crescendo representative of a heightened emotional involvement. Then, as the sounds subside, there is a decrescendo followed by silence. The magnificence of such orchestration is in the mainstream of Romantic musical development, and has led Mr. Schubert to conclude, somewhat rhapsodically perhaps, that

> Very few writers and not many musicians could compose such music. There is harmony and melody. There is rhythm and counterpoint, and there are solo voices . . . it is like the last movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Of course, it is true that all this music is scattered through the story. The reader does not hear it as a whole. But its effect is still felt and it unifies and

> dominates the account of Goodman Brown. It is the musical background for his dream.[7]

The effect of these symphonic elements is to create a mood and atmosphere that is sombre and foreboding. In both "Ethan Brand" and "Young Goodman Brown," this ominous atmosphere surrounds a character who is out of tune with the harmony of both nature and human nature. Nature itself is personified as a coherent, living unity--a pantheistic unity which voices its horror toward the individual's sin in a manner reminiscent of the howling and stormy nature in King Lear. It is the auditory conscience of the universe.

"My Kinsman, Major Molineux," written some nineteen years after "Ethan Brand," uses the same symmetrical arrangement of the seven waves of laughter which characterized its predecessor. During the first two thirds of the story, Robin inquires about his kinsman's residence on six different occasions. Three of his questionings are followed by laughter of some sort. The old citizen responds to Robin's question in "a tone of excessive anger and annoyance."

[7]Hawthorne, the Artist, p. 117.

The old man's speech is characterized by "two hems" which are uttered at regular intervals and are of "a peculiarly solemn and sepulchral intonation" (p. 1210). Robin is rebuked by the old man and "hastened away, pursued by an ill-mannered roar of laughter from the barber's shop" (p. 1211).

The second laugh is the response which greets Robin's second inquiry concerning his kinsman's residence. It is a "general laugh, in which the innkeeper's voice might be distinguished, like the dropping of small stones into a kettle" (p. 1213). This laugh is contrasted with "the murmur of voices" and "whispered conversation" of the people who are watching the interchange between Robin and the innkeeper.

The third laugh is uttered by the "guardian of midnight order" in "accents that seemed to fall asleep as soon as they were uttered" (p. 1215). As the watchman disappears, Robin hears the "sound of drowsy laughter stealing along the solitary street." At this point, then, the sound imagery becomes quite

soporific, suggestive of a dream-like transition in the story.[8] The next sound Robin hears is

> a murmur which swept continually along the street, yet was scarcely audible, except to an unaccustomed ear like his; it was a low, dull, dreamy sound, compounded of many noises, each of which was at too great a distance to be separately heard. Robin marvelled at this snore of a sleeping town, and marvelled more whenever its continuity was broken by now and then a distant shout, apparently loud where it originated. (P. 1217.)

As Robin becomes drowsy, he hears the "sound of footsteps along the opposite pavement." Next, he directs "a loud, peevish, and lamentable cry" to the stranger whose footsteps, supposedly, had awakened him. This time, however, the stranger addresses Robin "in a tone of real kindness, which had become strange to Robin's ear," and offers to share the bewildered youth's vigil for his kinsman.

The scene of the vigil is significant in several respects. Up to this point there have been three rolls of laughter, each roll appearing after a question. These waves of laughter, moreover, are

[8]For a discussion of Hawthorne's use of dreams and dream devices, see Joseph C. Pattison, "Point of View in Hawthorne," PMLA, LXXXII (October 1967), 363-369.

contrasted with the eerie quietness of a city asleep--except for the mysterious laughter and nocturnal noises of those inhabitants hostile to Robin. The auditory images consist chiefly of subdued and soporific images intended to give the story a soothing and sleepy tone suggestive of Robin's dream-like journey. Following the third laugh, however, all the sounds cease while Robin apprehensively awaits the ominous arrival of his kinsman. As a result, the reader's suspense is heightened in anticipation of the parade which follows.

The final, and most dramatic, scene begins as Robin and the stranger hear "a noise of shouting, which had long been remotely audible" (p. 1219). The auditory images begin to come faster now, as the fourth roll of laughter provides a counterpoint to the low rumble rapidly approaching the two observors:

> The sounds of a trumpet in some neighboring street now became so evident and continual, that Robin's curiosity was strongly excited. In addition to the shouts, he heard frequent bursts from many instruments of discord, and a wild and confused laughter filled up the intervals. (P. 1220.)

The noises awaken the town and "the near approach of

the uproar had now disturbed the neighborhood." The townsfolk, anxious to participate in the debacle, "hailed each other from house to house . . . . The shouts, the laughter, and the tuneless bray, the antipodes of music, came onwards with increasing din, till scattered individuals, and then denser bodies, began to appear round a corner at the distance of a hundred yards" (p. 1220). The sounds continue to build steadily and with increasing power, as "the band of fearful wind-instruments, sending forth a fresher discord" rises in intensity while the people add to the dissonance of the scene by "piercing the confusion of heavier sounds with their shrill voices of mirth or terror" (p. 1221). The sounds reach a deafening crescendo as the musicians pass Robin with the "rattling of wheels over the stones"--a rattling that blends into the trumpets, which "vomited [their] horrid breath, and then held their peace; the shouts and laughter of the people died away, and there remained only a universal hum, allied to silence" (p. 1221). The magnitude of the dissonant sound imagery orchestrates the grand entrance of Major Molineux.

With the entrance of the dishonored major come the final four peals of laughter. As the tarred and

feathered major sits rather ignominiously in the cart, Robin discerns "a voice of sluggish merriment" which belongs to the night watchman. His laughter is immediately joined by "a peal of laughter like the ringing of silvery bells"--the voice of the young girl he had met earlier. The sixth laugh is the loudest thus far, and "sailed over the heads of the multitude." It is "a great, broad laugh, broken in the midst by two sepulchral hems; thus, 'Haw, haw, haw,--hem, hem,--haw, haw, haw, haw!'" (p. 1222). This, of course, is the voice of the old citizen who appeared as the first person Robin encountered in his quest. The onomatopoeic description of the old citizen's voice is a "motto" theme which unifies the narrative. His is the first voice we hear and the last laugh we hear. It is true that the device is in its simplist form in this story, but it is representative of the device Hawthorne uses some nineteen years later in The House of the Seven Gables where the murmuring of Maule's well, the music of Alice Pyncheon's harpsichord and Phoebe's light and airy strains unify the novel by appearing at different points in the story while retaining their original sound images. Sound images of this type function in the same way

that the leitmotiv functions in Wagnerian opera. Each character is described in specific sound images and whenever we hear those sounds, we know which character to expect. Furthermore, this use of the "motto" theme is intended to synthesize the separate sound patterns into a whole. This synthesis is a fusion of the three distinct rolls of laughter, each of which the reader heard earlier as individual themes or leitmotifs. Here, then, as in the other short stories, the union of the motto themes occurs during the finale and sounds like the climax of a grand choral or orchestral arrangement.

Robin, slightly inebriated by the magnitude and rapidity of the sounds, begins to see the joke and joins "the fiends that throng in mockery" around his kinsman, Major Molineux. His laugh is sinful and the climax of the evil scene:

> Then Robin seemed to hear the voices of the barbers, of the guests of the inn, and of all who had made sport of him that night. The contagion was spreading among the multitude, when all at once, it seized upon Robin, and he sent forth a shout of laughter that echoed through the street,--every man shook his sides, every man emptied his lungs, but Robin's shout was the loudest there. The

> cloud-spirits peeped from their
> silvery islands, as the
> congregated mirth went roaring
> up the sky! (P. 1222.)

Robin's laugh, like Ethan Brand's, is the seventh and final peal of laughter "in that tempestuous sea of sound." And both their laughs are the loudest and both occur during the dramatic climax of their respective stories, followed immediately by silence, much in the same way Goodman Brown's was.

During the first two thirds of "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," the rolls of laughter provide ominous and mysterious sounds which disrupt the quietness usually characteristic of night--a quietness which is necessary for and normally characteristic of sleep. But quietness does not prevail. This disruption of the natural quietness suggests abnormal and evil deeds, much in the same way as the discordant sounds disrupt a sweetly dulcet nature in "Young Goodman Brown." The effect of such sound imagery is to suggest that some black mass or other evil event is taking place. In Robin's case, it is a black masquerade.

The ambiguity of "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" opens the story to a variety of interpretations; nevertheless, on at least one level of interpretation,

there seems something abnormal in the way the major is tarred and feathered. The major's only crime is his "guilt" of being a Tory during the Revolution. Despite his political alliance, he was a "majestic person" with a "steady soul," and the harsh treatment he receives is "the foul disgrace of a head grown gray in honor" (p. 1221). He seems the unfortunate victim of something resembling a witch hunt. The sounds, therefore, are those dissonant and harsh sounds which represent the fiendish behavior of the townspeople, all of whom seem to enjoy their black masquerade. Like the sounds they produce, their souls are full of discord.

"The Hollow of the Three Hills" is an interesting tale in that the auditory pattern is intricately woven in discordant and unharmonious sounds which accompany "the daughter who had wrung the aged hearts of her parents,--the wife who had betrayed the trusting fondness of her husband,--the mother who had sinned against natural affection, and left her child to die" (p. 944). The sounds begin slowly and quietly, "resembling the dim pages of a book which we strive to read by an imperfect and gradually brightening light" (p. 943).

> In such a manner, as the prayer proceeded, did those voices strengthen upon the ear; till at length the petition ended, and the conversation of an aged man, and of a woman, broken and decayed like himself, became distinctly audible to the lady as she knelt . . . their voices were encompassed and reechoed by the walls of a chamber, the windows of which were rattling in the breeze; the regular vibration of a clock, the crackling of a fire, and the tinkling of the embers as they fell among the ashes, rendered the scene almost as vivid as if painted to the eye.

As the old couple discuss their absent daughter, their querulous and tearful sorrows, reflected in their voices, "seemed to melt into the sound of the wind sweeping mournfully among the autumn leaves." Their mournful lamentations are followed by strange murmurings, shrieks, sweet female voices, wild roars of laughter, groanings, sobs, chains rattling, fierce and stern voices, love songs, funeral hymns, solemn voices and the sounds of footsteps.

Shortly later, when her husband laments the

> perfidy, of a wife who had broken her holiest vows, of a home and heart made desolate . . . the shout, the laugh, the shriek, the sob, rose up in unison, till they changed into the hollow, fitful, and uneven sound of the wind, as it

> fought among the pine-trees on
> those three lonely hills.
> (P. 944.)

The third time, the "evil woman began to weave her spell," the "knolling of a bell stole in among the intervals of her words, like a clang that had travelled far over valley and rising ground." We are told that the bell grows "sadder and deepened into the tone of a death bell" as it tolls dolefully in the hollow. The next sound we hear is the rustling of funeral garments "so that the ear could measure the length of their melancholy array." While the priest reads the burial service, the sound of the pages in his book can be heard rustling in the breeze. "And though no voice but his was heard to speak aloud, still there were revilings and anathemas, whispered but distinct, from women and from men," breathed against the woman who had committed the sin of breaking away from the chain of humanity. The auditory picture is a cacophonous one, since the chief character's crimes are great. Hawthorne is quite consciously using dissonant sounds to heighten the horror of her estrangement from humanity.

Hawthorne, moreover, is quite conscious of symmetry in "The Hollow of the Three Hills." There are

three hills, three crimes, and thus, three sound patterns. The first sound pattern paints a picture of parental agony; the second represents the estranged girl's husband, whose own voice might once have been "manly and melodious"; and the third pattern echoes with the death knoll, which tolls for the child the girl left to die as well as for the girl herself, who dies at the conclusion of the seance. Edgar Allan Poe notes that the tale achieves a power and originality and a heightened effect because Hawthorne makes "the ear, in place of the eye, the medium by which the fantasy is conveyed." The sounds, Poe feels, "have an all-sufficient intelligence."[9]

One of Hawthorne's favorite sounds is the sound of bells--a sound which permeates his fiction.[10] Likewise, in his notebooks he is repeatedly writing about the different bells he hears. And, at least on one occasion, he records that the sounds of bells "produced more effect on me than anything else." At

[9]The Complete Works, ed. James A. Harrison (New York, 1965), p. 112.

[10]Gretchen Graf Jordan discusses Hawthorne's bell as a historical symbol in "Hawthorne's 'Bell': Historical Evolution through Symbol," Nineteenth Century Fiction, XIX (September 1964), 123-139.

other times, he will comment on the "deep voice" of a bell, or reflect that "it was a remarkably deep-toned bell." While in England, he would listen to the abbey bells "clamorous for joy, chiming merrily, musically, and obstreperously--the most rejoicing sound that can be conceived." Later he would comment, "then Great Tom told us it was eight o'clock, in far the sweetest and mightiest accents that I ever heard from any bell--slow, too, and solemn, and allowing the reverberations of each stroke to die away before the succeeding one fell."[11]

For Hawthorne, there was a heavenly note in the majestic tolling of church bells high above the noisy city sounds. Commercial bells, on the other hand, produced offensive sounds. In The House of the Seven Gables, for example, we hear the "sharp and peevish tinkle" of the cent-shop bells ringing off and on. It is "a hateful clammor" which disturbs the sensitivities of the aesthetic Clifford. The bells, in this case, produce harsh sounds since they signal the crass commercialism to which Hepzibah has turned. The baker's cart, with the "jingle-jangle of its dissonant bells,"

[11]The English Notebooks by Nathaniel Hawthorne, ed. Randall Stewart (New York, 1941), pp. 609, 581, 235, 468.

produces similar sounds.

When used for their ordinary purpose, however, bells tolled either for a marriage or for a funeral. In this respect, the sounds produced had two meanings, neither of which Hawthorne forgot, for he states:

> the other morning, on my way to the station, I found a crowd collected; and high over head the Cathedral bells were chiming for a wedding. These chimes of bells are exceedingly impressive, so broadly gladsome as they are, filling the whole air and every nook of one's heart with sympathy; they are good for people to rejoice with, and good also for a marriage, because, through all their joy, there is something solemn--a tone of that voice which we have heard so often at funerals.[12]

Both meanings of the bells' tone are brought together quite powerfully in "The Wedding Knell," where the bell functions as an auditory barometer, measuring the spiritual journey of Mr. Ellenwood and Mrs. Dabney. In this story, the chimes which accompany the marriage are doleful rather than joyful--an oxymoronic device intended to represent the disordered state of the two individuals marrying "in the twilight of their years." They are estranged from "the common rules of society."

[12] English Notebooks, p. 557.

Mr. Ellenwood is a selfish person whose conduct is marked by "some wild eccentricity." Hawthorne tells us that "his caprices had their origin in a mind that lacked the support of an engrossing purpose." Likewise, the widow was "that wisest, but unloveliest of woman, a philosopher," and the "one frailty that made her ridiculous" was her pride. With their flaws explained, Hawthorne proceeds to orchestrate the marriage ceremony with the auditory backdrop of the macabre wedding knell which reverberates throughout the story like a death bell.

As the bridal party reaches the door, "the clumsy wheels of several old-fashioned coaches were heard." Then, with the bride's first step into the church, "the bell swung heavily in the tower above her, and sent forth its deepest knell. The vibrations died away and returned with prolonged solemnity, as she entered the body of the church" (p. 868). The "first boding stroke of the bell" is immediately contrasted with the gentlemen's whisper that the bells' sound, usually merry, "has only a funeral knell for her." The second knell is no less ominous, and fills the church "with a visible gloom." This time, moreover, Hawthorne provides the heavy knells with counterpoints. Thus,

the second tolling is followed by a "slight scream . . . and a confused whispering." The bell continues "to swing, strike, and vibrate, with the same doleful regularity as when a corpse is on its way to the tomb" (p. 869). We are reminded by our sound-conscious narrator that the silence between the deep-toned strokes "is broken only by whispers." The third peal from the church bells sounds "so mournfully, that the sunshine seemed to fade in the air." Again, the toll is followed by a whisper, and then the bridesmaid's scream. As the "dark procession" passes down the aisle, a young girl giggles hysterically and then faints "with laughter on her lips." The next sound we hear is the groom's voice "that seemed to melt into the clang of the bell, which fell heavily on the air while he spoke." With the death knell yet tolling in the background, the groom, "in hollow accents," reveals the reason for appearing at his wedding arrayed in his death shroud. His explanation is met with a groan. Hawthorne then proceeds to explain the significance of the ceremony: "the whole scene expressed, by the strongest imagery, the vain struggle of the gilded vanities of this world, when opposed to age, infirmity, sorrow and death." This little bit of mummery achieves its desired effect, and

the bride realizes, for the first time, that her life "is gone in vanity and emptiness."

As a result of their long-delayed repentence for lives spent in foolish vanity, "their earthly affection changed into something holy as religion." During this transformation, the funeral knell, tolling throughout, finally yields to a more harmonious sound pattern representative of the old couple's spiritual renaissance:

> as the ceremony proceeded, the organ, as if stirred by the sympathies of this impressive scene, poured forth an anthem, first mingling with the dismal knell, then rising to a loftier strain, till the soul looked down upon its woe. And when the awful rite was finished, the organ's peal of solemn triumph drowned the Wedding knell. (P. 872.)

Thus, the sounds, comprised initially of the harsh clamoring of the bell, groans, shrieks and whispers, reach a higher strain at the end of the tale, symbolic of a heightened spiritual awareness.

The "Legends of the Province House" contain tremulous and foreboding strains of auditory imagery. "Howe's Masquerade," the first of four historical-fictional legends, is peopled with harsh and expressive sounds intended to create an ominous aura around the

mystical pageant. A ball is in progress "to hide the distress and danger of the period" during the seige of Boston. The clock of the Old South has peeled eleven times and is followed by laughter--laughter which nervously greets the rumor that a pageant is soon to appear. Next, we hear the martial strains of music, emanating from the military band--strains which suggest "a slow funeral march." These "lugubrious strains" usher in the procession "in a loud and doleful summons." The parade is effective, for the reader is informed that, with the exit of the hated Colonel Joliffe, all festivals of British rulers in the Province House came to an end.

The legend of "Edward Randolph's Portrait," like "Howe's Masquerade," contains peculiar tones, harsh cries, tones of horror, whispers, laughter, and soft, sad accents which set the tone for the visitation of the sins of the fathers upon the sons. The narrator, moreover, authenticates the legend of the black portrait by noting that

> During the progress of the story
> a storm had been gathering abroad,
> and raging and rattling so loudly
> in the upper regions of the Province
> House, that it seemed as if all the
> old governors and great men were
> running riot above stairs while

> Mr. Bela Tiffany babbled of them below. In the course of generations, when many people have lived and died in an ancient house, the whistling of the wind through its crannies, and the creaking of its beams and rafters, become strangely like the tones of the human voice, or thundering laughter, or heavy footsteps treading the deserted chambers. It is as if the echoes of half a century were revived. Such were the ghostly sounds that roared and murmured in our ears when I took leave of the . . . Province House. (P. 970.)

Here the auditory images provide an ancestral echo which yet rumbles through eternity in abhorrence of the evil founder of the Province House, Edward Randolph, "the arch-enemy of New England . . . the destroyer of our liberties" (p. 965). Hence, lest anyone doubt the authenticity of the legend, the auditory images reinforce the tale. They appear and strike the auditor's ears as if summoned by the raconteur's reminiscences. The device is much like the parlor experiences when mysterious tales are told and then followed, supposedly, by eerie sounds as if some communication had been established with the supernatural realm. In any event, this invocation of the imagination is a successful way of substantiating the legend.

"Lady Eleanore's Mantle," the third legend, displays

sound patterns representative of her sin. She "took her stand above human sympathies" by withdrawing from their bond. As a result, her arrival at the Province House is met by the "doleful clang" that the bell of the Old South was just then tolling for a funeral--"an awkward coincidence." The sounds which surround Lady Eleanore are whispers, nervous shudders and "half-wicked sarcasms." Furthermore, her voice is "weary" and reflects "a moral deformity." Later, as her monomania finally leads to her death, her voice is capable only of "low moans . . . complaining dolefully" because she had wrapped herself in "Pride as in a Mantle, and scorned the sympathies of nature; and therefore has nature made her body the medium of a dreadful sympathy." An additional touch is added in the character of Jervase Helvyse, a satanic figure who makes her death chamber echo "with his outburst of insane merriment" (p. 980).

Pride, which Hawthorne considered a cardinal sin, is also the cause of the deaths of the mountain dwellers and their visitor in "The Ambitious Guest." Within the first few sentences, the reader's ears are struck by the pleasant sounds of a roaring fire and mirthful children. He is told to listen for stones

for stones that often rumble down the mountainside. What appears as a tranquil family setting is soon disturbed by the wind "rattling the door, with a sound of wailing and lamentation before it passed into the valley." The family, momentarily saddened by the sound, are soon gladdened "when they perceived that the latch was lifted by some traveller, whose footsteps had been unheard amid the dreary blast which heralded his approach, and wailed as he was entering, and went moaning away from the door" (p. 990). This early description is a good piece of auditory foreshadowing and prepares the reader for the impending disaster. No sooner is the guest seated than "something like a heavy footstep was heard without, rushing down the steep side of the mountain, as with long and rapid strides, and taking such a leap in passing the cottage as to strike the opposite precipice" (p. 991). Shortly later, the ominous sounds are again evident, as

> the wind through the Notch took a deeper and drearier sound. It seemed . . . like the choral strain of the spirits of the blast, who in old Indian times had their dwelling among these mountains . . . . There was a wail along the road, as if a funeral were passing. To chase away the gloom, the family threw pine branches on their fire, till the dry leaves crackled and the flame

> arose, discovering once again a scene of peace and humble happiness. (P. 994.)

Meanwhile, the guest, as well as the family sheltering him, begin to indulge their sinful vanities. One by one, the members express their wishes until the grandmother completes the circle by requesting that one of them hold a looking-glass over her face while she lies in her coffin so that she may see "whether all's right." With the completion of the old woman's "ghastly conception," the third and final sound pattern emerges:

> a sound abroad in the night, rising like the roar of a blast, had grown borad, deep, and terrible, before the fated group were conscious of it. The house and all within it trembled; the foundations of the earth seemed to be shaken, as if this awful sound were the peal of the last trump. (P. 995.)

The implication, of course, is that if the family and the ambitious guest had appreciated what they had and had remained in the house, they would have escaped the catastrophe. The "high-souled youth," obviously, is the greatest loser, for his obsession for "Earthly Immortality" costs him whatever renown he might have possessed had he remained where he belonged. His was the greatest agony of "that death moment."

The sound in "Rappaccini's Daughter" is well worth mentioning for its contrast between the low, soft tones of nature and the dissonant and harsh tones of human emotions poisoned by inhuman experimentation. The first sound we hear comes from the fountain in the middle of Rappaccini's garden and is "a little gurgling sound . . . that sung its song unceasingly and without heeding the vicissitudes around it." Giovanni then hears "a rustling behind a screen of leaves." After a while, he hears Beatrice call to her father in a "rich and youthful voice . . . a voice as rich as a tropical sunset." Her voice is described two more times as "rich," a voice "that came forth as it were like a gush of music, and with a mirthful expression half childish and half woman-like" (p. 1051). Later, Giovanni hears "rustling leaves" followed by "the rustling of a silken garment." Beatrice speaks to him "with the music of a pleasant laugh." Then she addresses the shrub in a murmur before "uttering a shriek that went through his [Giovanni's] heart like a dagger" when he tried to touch the poisonous shrub. Beatrice again sends up the "rich sweetness of her tones to float around him in his chamber and echo and reverberate through his heart." When Baglioni addresses Giovanni, the former's tone "tortures" the latter's soul, and Giovanni "groaned and hid his face."

Again, "a rich, sweet voice came floating up from the garden."

With knowledge of the poisonous garden and its effects, Giovanni bitterly addresses Beatrice: "Accursed one! cried he, with venomous scorn." Beatrice responds with a "murmur" and a "low moan out of her heart." Finally, as she dies, she speaks "feebly" and then she "murmured"--a "poor victim of man's ingenuity and of thwarted nature, and of the fatality that attends all such efforts of perverted wisdom" (p. 1065).

It is interesting to note that, in the first half of the story, the sounds--those produced by nature intermixed with Beatrice's harmonious sounds--are pleasant and dulcet. But, with the knowledge of the garden, the Eden-like innocence is destroyed and the sounds shift to those harsher and baser human sounds of groans, murmurs, moans, and shrieks.

Since Hawthorne feels that man is "noisier" than nature, the instances in his fiction of an individual who is described in harmonious sound imagery are relatively few. Perhaps the most "harmonious" character in the tales and sketches is the poet-humanitarian Ernest in "The Great Stone Face." He is the one who perceives that, if the stone face could talk,

"its voice must needs be pleasant." We are told that the legend of the great stone face--that a child would be born one day who would resemble the granite visage--"had been murmured by the mountain-streams, and whispered by the wind among the tree tops" (p. 1172). As the procession of heirs to the legend appear in the village--Gathergold, Old Blood and Thunder, Stony Phiz, and the poet--only Ernest fails to join in the clamorous greeting and frenzied acceptance of each pretender.

Further, it is Ernest who three times hears a voice "as if the Great Face were whispering to him,--fear not, Ernest; he will come" (p. 1177). On each occasion, the community welcomes the particular heir-apparent amidst a bulk of dissonant sounds, from the loud voice of Dr. Battleblast to the shouts of applause and the drum rolls. Ernest, however, remains quiet and reticent on the periphery of the clamorous crowds, for he realizes that none of the candidates quite matches the Great Stone Face.

Hawthorne tells the reader that Ernest "had given so many of the best hours of his life to unwordly hopes for some great good to mankind, that it seemed as though he had been talking with Angels." His daily life is compared to a "quiet stream" which daily makes the world a better place. He was generous and kind,

eventually becoming a preacher, whereupon his good deeds "flowed also forth in speech. He uttered truths that wrought upon and moulded the lives of those who heard him." We are further informed that, "as the murmur of a rivulet, came thoughts out of his mouth that no other lips had spoken."

As the last heir-apparent, the poet, converses with the famous Ernest, the two "accorded into one strain, and made delightful music" (p. 1182). The poet's poetry reflects "the far-off echo of a heavenly song." And in "The Artist of the Beautiful," Hawthorne described the poet as one who "leaves his song half-sung, or finishes it, beyond the scope of mortal ears, in a celestial choir" (p. 1151). But the poet's flaw, in this case, is that his life has not corresponded with his thought. He is out of tune with the chain of humanity. Ernest, on the other hand, is in tune with the magnetic chain, for his life has corresponded with his thought. As a result, he enjoys the best of both possible worlds--he is at once a poet and a humanitarian. Thus, when he speaks,

> His words had power, because they accorded with his thoughts; and his thoughts had reality and depth, because they harmonized with the life which he had always lived.

> It was not mere breath that this preacher uttered; they were the words of life, because a life of good deeds and holy love was melted into them. Pearls, pure and rich, had been dissolved into this precious draught. The poet, as he listened, felt that the being and character of Ernest were a nobler strain of poetry than he had ever written. (P. 1184.)

Ernest is the apotheosis of man. He is Hawthorne's heroic example of the ideal man, the man who participates in and sets an example for humanity. That is why he has a correspondingly elevated voice. And that is why Hawthorne describes him in harmonious sound patterns.

Hawthorne's auditory imagery in the short stories, then, is patterned and highly functional. It is structured to correspond with a character's attunement with the harmony of the universe. It may be the character's voice which reflects his ability to harmonize with the universe or it may be the images surrounding him that indicate his degree of moral attunement. In any event, whenever some character fails to harmonize with the universe, the sound pattern is noticeably harsh and displeasing. Whenever a character is morally in tune with the harmony of the universe, on the other hand, the pattern contains

pleasing and congruous sounds. In short, a character's morality, or lack of it, is consistently described in auditory images.

CHAPTER III

The Function of Hawthorne's Imagery In the Novels

Although the auditory imagery in the novels is not as tightly woven as it is in the short stories, it is quantitatively significant and functions in much the same way. Throughout the novels, Hawthorne uses sound imagery to represent a character's attunement with the universe. It is a symbolic and metaphorical imagery intended to represent the inner world of man by relating it to the outer world of nature. For this reason, Hawthorne uses nature as a source of sounds. Thus, when Dimmesdale, in The Scarlet Letter, meets Hester in the forest, when Coverdale, in The Blithedale Romance, eavesdrops on Zenobia and Westervelt, when Judge Pyncheon, in The House of the Seven Gables, deprives Maule of his inheritance, and when Donatello, in The Marble Faun, murders the monk, the outer world of nature audibly expresses its animadversion to man's evil and recondite inner world.

It is true, however, that Hawthorne's sound imagery, while making clear the relation between man and nature, never dominates any one novel. Often it is a minor part of a larger, artistic whole and usually remains unobtrusively in the background. Seldom is the reader

consciously aware of the overall auditory pattern. But, when isolated, the sound imagery may be shown to be significant and consistent in design.

The sound pattern in The Scarlet Letter, for example, begins as Pearl utters three cries upon the scaffold during the opening scene. These three "cries of pain" are juxtaposed with Dimmesdale's "broken" voice, the "murmuring among the dignified and reverend occupants of the balcony," Governor Bellingham's "loud and solemn tone," and the hum of the crowd which surrounds the scaffold. This is the first of three important sound sequences which pivot around the scaffold. The second sequence occurs when Dimmesdale casts forth his tormented cry in the middle of the book and the third is the occasion of his confession at the conclusion.

Following Hester's ignominious treatment upon the scaffold, the sound images begin to reflect her ostracism from society. While the Puritan children torment Hester by hurling "shrill cries" at her, nature, too, seems to join in the general condemnation, and "it could have caused her no deeper pang, had the leaves of the trees whispered the dark story among

themselves,--had the summer breeze murmured about it,--had the wintry blast shrieked it aloud!" (p. 134).[1] The sounds, in this instance, are the expressions of the outer world of nature, as the moaning wind is in "The Gentle Boy" when it mingles with Ilbrahim's cries while he lies moaning on his father's grave. And the effect is the same. The reader not only hears the sounds, he is also reminded that they are echoed throughout the seasons.

Later, Pearl, while in the forest, notices that the brook is "all the time sighing and murmuring," just as Maule's well in The House of the Seven Gables is all the time murmuring and the fountains in The Marble Faun are all the time plashing and bubbling. When Pearl asks her mother the reason, Hester replies: "If thou hast a sorrow of thine own, the brook might tell thee of it . . . even as it is telling me of mine" (p. 195). The stream is further described as maintaining "a babble, kind, quiet, soothing, but melancholy, like the voice of a young child that was spending its infancy without playfulness, and knew not how to be merry among sad acquaintance and events of

[1]Citations from Hawthorne in my text, unless otherwise indicated, are to The Complete Novels and Selected Tales of Nathaniel Hawthorne, ed. Norman Holmes Pearson (New York, 1937).

sombre hue" (p. 194).

Shortly later, when Dimmesdale and Hester discuss their plight in the forest, Dimmesdale dolefully remarks that "there is no one worse than . . . the polluted priest . . . who has violated, in cold blood, the sanctity of the human heart." Nature seems to share his remorse, and, as Hawthorne describes it,

> The forest was obscure around them, and creaked with a blast that was passing through it. The boughs were tossing heavily above their heads; while one solemn old tree groaned dolefully to another, as if telling the sad story of the pair that sat beneath, or constrained to forebode evil to come. (P. 200.)

These are the same doleful sounds which fill the air in "Young Goodman Brown." They are the cries of a prosopopoeic nature--cries evoked by Dimmesdale's and Hester's sin. It is a device, F. O. Matthiesson points out, that Hawthorne had learned from the seventeenth century, for just as the heavens groaned in Milton's fall of the angels, nature whispers sadly at the sins man commits and at his loss of faith, as in "Young Goodman Brown."[2]

Following their fateful interview, the sound

[2]American Renaissance (London, 1941), p. 284.

imagery begins to build toward a powerful climax which is to culminate in the election sermon Dimmesdale delivers. Initially, Dimmesdale's voice is described as "tremulously sweet, rich, deep, and broken." Later, it is further described as "sweet, tremulous, but powerful," and, again, it is "still rich and sweet, [but] had a certain melancholy prophecy of decay in it" (p. 155). Throughout the novel, Dimmesdale's voice is an outward manifestation of an inner conflict. It always contains a hint of the minister's guilt in the same way that raising his hand to cover his heart is a hint.

At times, however, the guilt becomes impossible to repress. One such time is when Dimmesdale mounts the scaffold, dressed in the darkness of night, and "without any effort of his will, or power to restrain himself, he shrieked aloud; an outcry that went pealing through the night, and was beaten back from one house to another, and reverberated from the hills in the background; as if a company of devils, detecting so much misery and terror in it, had made a plaything of the sound, and were bandying it to and fro" (pp. 171-172). The minister's shriek is followed by silence and then by his "great peal of laughter," which Pearl answers

with no less than three "light, airy, childish laughs." The whole episode on the scaffold has a cathartic effect on the minister, and the next day, he delivers "a discourse which was held to be the richest and the most powerful, and the most replete with heavenily influences, that had ever proceeded from his lips" (p. 177). Dimmesdale's voice becomes stronger as he nears spiritual attunement. By ascending the scaffold, he comes closer to an admission of his sin than previously, and this confession is a momentary cure.

At the conclusion of the scaffold scene and following the interview in the forest, the sound imagery begins to develop a backdrop for the election sermon. The first sounds we hear are those martial tones made by "a variety of instruments . . . loud and piercing, that swelled heavenward, and uplifted [Dimmesdale] on its ascending wave" (p. 225). A counterpoint is provided by Mistress Hibbins "laughing so shrilly that all the market place could hear her." As Dimmesdale delivers his sermon, his voice "like all other music, . . . breathed passion and pathos." Formerly characterized by low and indistinct murmuring, tremulous and rich, but broken, his voice is now described as powerful and full in tone. Furthermore, as a result of his imminent return to the chain of

humanity, his voice, through its tone and cadence, communicates a message independent of the words. Thus, Hester, standing outside the church and unable to distinguish the words, is able to understand the minister's meaning through the music in his voice because it is "a tongue native to the human heart." Hawthorne is quite elaborate in his description of the process:

> Now she caught the low undertone, as of the wind sinking down to repose itself; then ascended with it, as it rose through progressive gradations of sweetness and power, until its volume seemed to envelop her with an atmosphere of awe and solemn grandeur. And yet, majestic as the voice sometimes became, there was forever in it an essential character of plaintiveness. A loud or low expression of anguish,--the whisper, or the shriek, as it might be conceived, of suffering humanity, that touched a sensibility in every bosom! At times this deep strain of pathos was all that could be heard, and scarcely heard, sighing amid a desolate silence. But even when the minister's voice grew high and commanding,--when it gushed irrepressibly upward,--when it assumed its utmost breadth and power, so overfilling the church as to burst its way through the solid walls and diffuse itself in the open air,--still, if the auditor listened intently, and for the purpose, he could detect the same cry of pain. What was it? The complaint of a human heart, sorrow-laden, perchance

> guilty, telling its secret, whether of guilt or sorrow, to the great heart of mankind; beseeching its sympathy or forgiveness,--at every moment,--in each accent,--and never in vain! It was this profound and continual undertone that gave the clergyman his most appropriate power. (P. 228.)

Dimmesdale's voice is unique. It is "Heaven's last and rarest attestation . . . the Tongue of Flame," a "gift that descended upon the chosen disciples at Pentecost." Further, it is his voice which enables Dimmesdale to address "the whole human brotherhood in the heart's native language" (p. 168). Such imagery illustrates Hawthorne's sympathy for and admiration of the tormented minister whose hidden sin is audibly detectable.

Dimmesdale's voice, therefore, represents his relation to the chain of mankind. It is weak and tremulous when he hides his sin, but grows stronger as he repents. The effect of his voice "telling its secret" is to cast a "high spell" upon the listeners who are filled with awe and wonder at the conclusion of the sermon. These listeners, moreover, are already members of that bond. Thus, Dimmesdale's verbal defect is noticeable when juxtaposed with those who

> were human beings enough, and [had] enough of highly wrought and symphonious feeling, to produce that more impressive sound than the organ tones of the blast, or the thunder, or the roar of the sea; even that mighty swell of many voices, blended into one great voice by the universal impluse which makes likewise one vast heart out of the many. (P. 232.)

Here, then, by way of contrast with the "cry of pain" underlying and characterizing Dimmesdale's speech, is the natural and harmonious tones of men united within the bond of humanity. And while Dimmesdale's voice is closer in harmony with the others, still detectable is that one discordant tone representative of his sin. It symbolizes his spiritual journey: he sins, learns from his sins, and becomes a better person for it. And, as he repents, his tone is one which ascends toward heaven, as opposed to the low and indistinct tones which sink earthward. It is similar to the ascension of the organ swell at the conclusion of "The Wedding Knell."

The rising together of voices in the "general throat of the community" tapers to a murmur, and finally subsides in silence as Dimmesdale admits his sin. As he dies upon the scaffold, "the multitude, silent till then, broke out in a strange, deep voice

of awe and wonder, which could not as yet find utterance, save in this murmur that rolled so heavily after the departed spirit" (p. 236). The auditory images, which begin during the opening scaffold scene, continue through Hester's interview with Dimmesdale in the forest, and end with the latter's death, come chiefly from two sources: the voice of man and the voice of nature, both of which unite to express an abhorrence of a violation of the natural law and harmony.

Hawthorne's use of auditory imagery to describe the voice of man or the voice of nature always provides an insight into that character or nature. Pearl, for example, is usually laughing and her laughter is always full of elfish merriment and music. She is the "laughing image of a fiend popping out" (p. 144). When she screams, it is "with a terrific volume of sound." At times, she will utter an eldritch scream." Or she will break "continually into shouts of a wild, inarticulate, and sometimes piercing music" (p. 219). The suggestion is that Pearl is at least an unusual child, at most an elf or wild sprite.

At the other end of the gamut is Chillingworth, a satanic character who is always whispering. His voice, like his soul, lacks substance. A quietness

surrounds him. Whenever he tries to penetrate the minister's heart, "the floor would creak" and "his garments would rustle." True, the auditory imagery is qualitative rather than quantitative in this case, but once the reader recognizes those sounds associated with a particular character, he can better recognize and isolate that character's intentions. The description of Chillingworth, like that of Hilda in The Marble Faun, is a description which suggests a spiritual rather than a physical being. But Hilda's quietness is holy whereas Chillingworth's is evil.

In a similar fashion, the sound pattern in The House of the Seven Gables contains a wealth of harsh auditory imagery designed to accompany ominous and unnatural events. Throughout the novel, Maule's well--a prominent sound motif in the work--murmurs no less than a dozen times as a reminder of the sins of the fathers being visited on the sons. And it is Phoebe who discerns "a certain noise in Judge Pyncheon's throat" which echoes Maule's curse that "God will give him blood to drink." Later, the judge's voice is described as "deep as a thunder-growl" (p. 319).

Prior to Jaffrey's murder, there is a series of unharmonious sound images which create an interesting pattern. The tramp of the governor's "ponderous riding-

boots as might of itself have been audible in the remotest of the seven gables" is followed quickly by a "loud, free knock" upon the judge's door. Hawthorne describes the racket as so great that it "might have disturbed the dead." As the door finally opens, a sudden gust of wind produces a "loud sigh" causing a "singular stir . . . more like a hush." In short, the judge's murder caused a great deal of noise. And, as Matthiessen observes, it "coincides naturally with the outer violence of the equinoctial storm."[3]

The sounds preceding the death of the second judge produce a similar effect. They act as a tone-giver by creating an ominous setting for the death of the judge. As Hepzibah searches in vain for Clifford, we almost hear "the rustle of dead people's garments." We hear her knock on Clifford's door: "Three regular strokes . . . perfectly distinct, and with meaning in them; for, modulate it with what cautious art we will, the hand cannot help playing some tune of what we feel, upon the senseless wood" (p. 391). Then we hear her shriek as she discovers his absence. Her shriek is followed by her whispered exhortation to Clifford, his laugh, her cry again--"choking in her throat"--

[3]American Renaissance, p. 35.

her gasp, his cry, and, as they leave the house, his whispers.

With Hepzibah and Clifford fleeing and the judge sitting quietly in the empty and silent house, Hawthorne directs the reader to listen carefully.

> That puff of the breeze was louder; it had a tone unlike the dreary and sullen one which has bemoaned itself, and afflicted all mankind with miserable sympathy, for five days past. The wind has veered about! It now comes boisterously from the northwest . . . . The old house creaks again, and makes a vociferous but somewhat unintelligible bellowing in its sooty throat . . . partly in complaint at the rude wind, but rather, as befits their century and a half of hostile intimacy, in tough defiance. A rumbling kind of a bluster roars behind the fire-board. A door has slammed above stairs . . . what wonderful wind-instruments are these old timber mansions, and how haunted with the strangest noises, which immediately begin to sing, and sigh, and sob, and shriek,--and to smite with sledge-hammers, airy but ponderous, in some distant chamber . . . . It is too awful! This clamor of the wind through the lonely house; the Judge's quietude, as he sits invisible; and that pertinacious ticking of his watch. (Pp. 409-410).

The imagery, in this instance, provides good Gothic sound effects. The reader has little difficulty imagining the atmosphere created by the various ominous

sounds which enshroud Judge Pyncheon. Most effective, certainly, is the ticking of the judge's watch contrasted with his "quietude."

The judge's death, moreover, has a rather exhilarating effect on Clifford. His mental state, following the judge's death, might "fancifully be compared to a joyous piece of music, played with wild vivacity, but upon a disordered instrument. As the cracked jarring note might always be heard, and as it jarred loudest amid the loftiest exultation of the melody, so there was a continual quake through Clifford" (p. 395).

Another function of the auditory imagery in The House of the Seven Gables is to fill out characterization. Hepzibah is described, initially, in dissonant tones because she "dwelt in strict seclusion for more than a quarter of a century" (p. 261). As a result, her speech is described by "heavy" and "guilty" sighs which labor from her bosom. Likewise, her knees are "creaking joints." When she kneels to pray, her prayers are "inaudible . . . by mortal ear, but heard with all-comprehending love and pity in the farthest heaven." Her prayers are agonized prayers, "now whispered, now a groan, now a struggling silence"

(p. 260). Twenty-five years in isolation has exerted a telling influence.

When Phoebe enters the household, however, Hepzibah is able to blossom in the companionship. Phoebe seems to warm Hepzibah's "desolate old heart." After her first day in the Pyncheon household, Phoebe's effect on the old maid is highly therapeutic. And, as Phoebe prepares a lamp to set by Hepzibah, Hawthorne remarks that, "In Hepzibah's tone, at that moment, there was a certain rich depth and moisture, as if the words, commonplace as they were, had been steeped in the warmth of her heart . . . . Mellow, melancholy, yet not mournful, the tone seemed to gush up out of the deep well of Hepzibah's heart, all steeped in its profoundest emotion. There was a tremor in it, too, that--as all strong feeling is electric--partly communicated itself to Phoebe" (p. 300).

Later, as Hepzibah assures Clifford of her love for him, Hawthorne relates that her tone

> had a plaintive and really exquisite melody thrilling through it, yet without subduing a certain something which an obtuse auditor might still have mistaken for asperity. It was as if some transcendent musician should draw a soul-thrilling sweetness out of a cracked instrument, which makes its physical imperfection heard in the midst of ethereal harmony--so deep

> was the sensibility that found an organ in Hepzibah's voice. (P. 307.)

Hepzibah's tones, therefore, change from those hollow and musty noises to fuller and more melodic tones as a result of the medicinal value of love and participation in the chain of humanity. It is interesting to note, however, that her voice, while chiefly harmonious, still manifests a trace of her earlier cacophony. This is the same characteristic as in Dimmesdale's voice, in which the one plaintive note is yet detectable. The note represents the mark which is left as a result of sin. It is a kind of auditory scar tissue which is audible--and yet makes the fiber stronger. And it is this quality which gives the individual his peculiar strength--the knowledge which has come from sin.

Phoebe, in conjunction with Clifford, has been the agent of Hepzibah's transformation, and she is characterized by "frequent outbreaks of song, which were exceedingly pleasant to the ear. This natural tunefulness made Phoebe seem like a bird in a shadowy tree; or conveyed the idea that the stream of life warbled through her heart as a brook sometimes warbles through a pleasant little dell" (p. 289). Hawthorne also brings the two separate sound patterns together: "It was worth while to hear the croaking and hollow

tones of the old lady, and the pleasant voice of Phoebe, mingling in one twisted thread of talk" (p. 290).

Phoebe exerts a similar effect on Clifford. Hawthorne has told us that she "possessed the gift of song," and it is her song which fills the heart of not only Hepzibah, but also Clifford, who "would be full of harmonious life, just as a long-silent harp is full of sound, when the musician's fingers sweep across it" (p. 328). Phoebe, of course, is the musician, and without her, his voice is "weak, tremulous, [and] wailing."

The sound imagery in The House of the Seven Gables is especially effective in creating a Gothic atmosphere. Alice, for example, the Pyncheon banshee, plays "sadly and beautifully on the harpsichord" whenever "one of the Pyncheons was to die" (p. 293). Thus, before Jaffrey's death, Hepzibah hears a "sweet, airy and delicate, though most melancholy strain" which she recognized "must proceed from Alice Pyncheon's harpsichord" (p. 378). With the legend of Alice, Hawthorne provides a sign-post for the reader. The device--a Hawthornian "leitmotiv"--creates a recurring mood of impending disaster which unifies the plot. When the reader hears these tones, he can expect a death. When Alice's mission is complete, however, and

the sins have been atoned for, she gives "one farewell touch of a spirit's joy upon her harpsichord," and floats "heavenward."

In addition to the murmuring of Maule's well and the strains of Alice Pyncheon's harpsichord, there is a third leitmotiv in The House of the Seven Gables--the ringing of the shop-bell. We hear the acrimonious tones of the shop-bell on and off throughout the novel. It is, like the blast of the fish-dealer's conch and "the ugly, little, venomous . . . noise" of the scissors-grinder's wheel, the embodiment of distasteful commercialism. Hence, the "naughty little tinkle" of the shop-bell grates on Clifford's poetic nature because "an individual of his temper can always be pricked more acutely through his sense of the beautiful and harmonious than through his heart" (p. 310).

There are other interesting examples of Gothic sound imagery in The House of the Seven Gables worth mentioning. In Chapter Six, Phoebe hears "the murmur of an unknown voice" three times on the night before Clifford's arrival. At first, it is "strangely indistinct . . . and less like articulate words than an unshaped sound." The second time, it resembles "an irregular respiration in some obscure corner of the room." And, thirdly, it is a "strange, vague murmur

which might be likened to an indistinct shadow of human utterance" (p. 300). All the mystery and suspense possible is contained in these sounds. The reader's ear is pricked by such sound imagery, and he is able to empathize in the manner Hawthorne intends.

The sound pattern in The Blithedale Romance, while perhaps less developed than in the other novels, does provide characterization and sets the tone. The early bits of sound imagery are the "wintry snow-storm roaring in the chimney" before Coverdale's journey to Blithedale, and the dreary storm during the journey--"a symbol of the cold, desolate, distrustful phantoms that invariably haunt the mind, on the eve of adventurous enterprises, to warn us back within the boundaries of ordinary life" (p. 449). This early auditory foreshadowing clearly establishes Coverdale's attitude toward the adventure he is about to undertake. It is the same remonstrant and personified nature which appears in all of Hawthorne's fiction.

The most important sound pattern, though, begins with the meeting between Coverdale and Westervelt on the woodpath. Westervelt's voice, when he addresses Coverdale in the forest, causes "a complete discord" with Coverdale's spiritual state. And when Westervelt

laughs, it is a "metallic" laugh (p. 495). Later we learn that his tone "represented that of worldly society at large, where a cold skepticism smothers what it can of our spiritual aspirations, and makes the rest ridiculous" (p. 499). And still later, Westervelt's conversation with Zenobia, partially overheard by Coverdale, moves the latter to fling down "an unearthly groan" amidst the "broken" and "hasty" tones of Zenobia and the "low" and "cool" ones of Westervelt. Next, we hear a "helpless groan" from Zenobia,

> a sound which, struggling out of the heart of a person of her pride and strength, affected me [Coverdale] more than if she had made the wood dolorously vocal with a thousand shrieks and wails.. (P. 501.)

Since Coverdale is eavesdropping--an intrusion on the sanctity of the human heart--the forest seems to urge Coverdale to inquire into the matter no further:

> A breeze stirred after them, and awoke the leafy tongues of the surrounding trees, which forthwith began to babble, as if innumerable gossips had all at once got wind of Zenobia's secret. But, as the breeze grew stronger, its voice among the branches was as if it said, "Hush! Hush!" and I resolved that to no mortal would I disclose what I had heard. (P. 501.)

Here, again, we are quite aware of a personified and, perhaps, pantheistic nature functioning as a moral and ethical commentator.

It is interesting that Coverdale tends to see Priscilla and Moodie as musical instruments, much in the same way that Hawthorne sees Clifford and Hepzibah. Priscilla is a delicate instrument with "fragile harp-strings" for nerves--harp-strings which "made sweet music at the airiest touch." Moodie, on the other hand, is like "an instrument long out of tune, the strings of which have ceased to vibrate smartly and sharply" (p. 490). Or he speaks languidly, "like a watch with an inelastic spring, that just ticks a moment or two, and stops again" (p. 488). And Zenobia speaks in "musical yet haughty and accents." Coverdale thinks that music--"light and airy, wild and passionate, or the full harmony of stately marches, in accordance with her varying mood--should have attended Zenobia's footsteps" (p. 531). Shortly later, Coverdale's feeling is confirmed as he hears " a rich, and, as it were, triumphant burst of music from a piano, in which he felt Zenobia's character" (p. 534).

Hawthorne has created such auditory imagery with

a keen sense of atmosphere and tone. The sounds he uses embellish both the setting and the characterization by appearing at those places in the fiction where they are most effective. The reader learns to watch for--indeed, listen for--the sounds associated with various characters, for each character has his own peculiar phrase or special theme.

This use of a "motto" theme or a leading sound motif is especially effective also in The Marble Faun where Donatello and Miriam are described with specific auditory images. And while the auditory imagery is less unified after the model's murder, it represents, up to that point, Miriam's and Donatello's relationship with the harmony of nature.

The sound pattern begins early in the novel as Donatello's voice is described as containing a "Tuscan rusticity of accent, and an unshaped sort of utterance, betokening that he must heretofore have been chiefly conversant with rural people" (p. 597). Miriam is usually associated with light, martial music, in keeping with her role as an independent woman.

In the Eden-like garden Donatello, as yet untouched by evil, can frolic in perfect harmony with Miriam.[4]

> He frisked around her, bubbling over with joy, which clothed itself in words that had little individual meaning, and in snatches of song that seemed as natural as bird-notes. Then their own laughter returning in the echoes, and laughed again at the response, so that the ancient and solemn grove became full of merriment for these two blithe spirits. A bird happening to sing cheerily, Donatello gave a peculiar call, and the little feathered creature came fluttering about his head, as if it had known him through many summers. (P. 637.)

The laughter of Donatello and Miriam is the wholesome laughter produced in a state of innocence and purity, not the horrible laughter we hear in "Ethan Brand" and "Young Goodman Brown," where laughter reflects the character's sin. As soon as the model--the devil--appears in the garden, however, cloaked in his evil and shadowy trappings and speaking in a "hoarse, harsh voice as if a great deal of damp were clustering in his throat," the music ceases and the idyllic pastoral scene vanishes--"a solitude had suddenly spread itself around them"(p. 642).

[4]Norris Yates discusses those images associated with ceremonial dancing in "Ritual and Reality: Mask and Dance Motifs in Hawthorne's Fiction," Philological Quarterly, XXXIV (January 1955), 56-70.

Prior to the model's death, Donatello, Kenyon, and Hilda join a strolling party in some songs. Miriam, after remaining silent for a while,

> threw out such a swell and gush of sound, that it seemed to pervade the whole choir of other voices, and then to rise above them all, and become audible in what would else have been the silence of an upper region. That volume of melodious voice was one of the tokens of a great trouble. There had long been an impulse upon her . . . to shriek till the thunderous anthem gave her an opportunity to relieve her heart by a great cry. (Pp. 684-685.)

The "great trouble" which plagues Miriam climaxes with the model's death. With the "stave of melody" yet ringing out from the city, the model is hurled into the same chasm in which the Palace of Caesars fell with "a hollow, rumbling sound of its fragments." It is the same chasm into which triumphant Roman armies had marched with their martial music playing. In short, the chasm is an auditory reservoir for the discordant sounds of a decadent Roman past. Now, the model's death scream is added--"a long, fearful cry, which quivered upward through the air, and sank quivering downward to the earth." The last sound we hear is the "dead thump" of the model's body crashing into the chasm.

Once the terrible deed is committed--physically by Donatello and spiritually by Miriam--neither is able to

rejoin the innocent and harmonious life they once knew. Furthermore, the music following the murder is sad and mournful. From the "lugubrious strain of a De Profundis to the "awful chant" of the monks beneath the church, the sounds are noticeably harsh and dissonant, sad and melancholy. The harmony is out of joint. We almost hear the icy fingers of the two murderers rattle together as they visit the dead Capuchin. In the cemetery, one monk "has his mouth wide open, as if he died in the midst of a howl of terror and remorse" (p. 701). Finally, when Donatello says goodbye to Miriam, the latter responds in a "thin, faint echo" (p. 705).

Since his natural harmony with nature is broken, Donatello no longer enjoys the rapport he once had with nature's creatures. When Kenyon visits Donatello at his home and urges Donatello to call the creatures as he once did, the call elicits repugnance and the animals avoid him, leading Donatello to exclaim: "They shun me! All nature shrinks from me! I live in the midst of a curse, that hems me round with a circle of fire! No innocent thing can come near me" (p. 733). The owls, moreover, beneath Donatello's chamber continually utter "soft, melancholy cries"--cries answered by the ringing of nearby convent bells "which echoed among the hills." Later, as Donatello sadly views the dusky horizon, he hears a woman's voice "singing a low, sad strain."

> The song, if song it could be called, that had only a wild rhythm, and flowed forth in the fitful measure of a wind-harp, did not clothe itself in the sharp brilliancy of the Italian tongue. The words . . . being softened and molten, as it were, into the melancholy richness of the voice that sung them. It was as the murmur of a soul bewildered amid the sinful gloom of earth and retaining only enough memory of a better state to make sad music of the wail, which would else have been a despairing shriek. Never was there profounder pathos than breathed through that mysterious voice; it brought the tears into the sculptor's eyes, with remembrances and forebodings of whatever sorrow he had felt or apprehended; it made Donatello sob, as chiming in with the anguish that he found unutterable, and giving it the expression which he vaguely sought. (P. 745.)

Thus, the auditory imagery shifts from harmony to cacophony and represents the sin committed. But the sin does have a positive effect, for Hawthorne's implication is that the individual learns from it and becomes a better person. If all the playful creatures now avoid Donatello, it is because of his fall from innocence. But, interestingly enough, the owls--a symbol of wisdom as well as of doom--do not desert Donatello. He tells Kenyon, for instance, "When I was a wild playful boy, the owls did not love me half so well" (p. 736). The idea, of course, is that wisdom comes with experience and maturity. When Donatello enters the room, therefore, the owls simply

give "a dismal croak or two." Their "croaks" and "melancholy cries" are, nonetheless, representative of the fall from innocence and are rightly dissonant sounds.

Hilda, unlike Donatello, is seldom described by auditory images, probably because she is less human and more angelic than the other characters. Her sound imagery is "slender" in two senses: that there is not much auditory description of her voice, and secondly, those tones which are described, are described as "slender." She lacks the "beef and ale" description accorded the other characters.

The sound pattern in The Marble Faun continues with Miriam's visit to Hilda at the tower. As Miriam nears the tower, she spies Hilda leaning out of a window as if in prayer. When she calls to Hilda, the angelic figure disappears behind the closed window. Miriam interprets this withdrawal as a sign "that the cry of her condemned spirit was shut out of heaven" (p. 692). Nor does Hilda join Miriam and Kenyon after the murder. Even Hilda's doves become quiet in Miriam's presence and do not coo again until Hilda confesses in the church. As she confesses, moreover, her "flow of spirits began to bubble forth, like the gush of a streamlet that has been shut up, by frost, or by a heavy stone over its source" (p. 803). As she

returns to her tower,

> the doves, who were waiting aloft, flung themselves upon the air, and came floating down about her head. The girl caressed them, and responded to their cooings with similar sounds from her own lips, and with words of endearment; and their joyful flutterings and airy little flights, evidently impelled by pure exuberance of spirits, seemed to show that the doves had a real sympathy with their mistress's state of mind. For peace had descended upon her like a dove. (P. 804.)

The descent of the pure white doves from heaven to one of heaven's creatures is more symbolic of the coming of grace than the coming of wisdom Donatello experiences with his owls. Thus, Hilda seems more an ethereal spirit than a human being.

The pattern of sounds in The Marble Faun concludes with the uproar of the carnival sweeping "like a tempestuous sea" through the market place. We hear first "a full band of martial music . . . roaring upward to the sky, with melody so powerful that it almost grew to discord." We hear the rattling of pea-filled bladders and the rattle of "salvos of confetti" falling "like a hail-storm." And we hear "the tramp of footsteps, the rattle of wheels, and the mingled hum of a multitude of voices, with strains of music and loud laughter breaking through" (pp. 844-851). In short,

it is a tumultuous and festive scene, much like the grand finale of a colorful musical.

As we have seen, the function of the auditory imagery is the most important aspect of the sound pattern in The Marble Faun. True, there are other examples of auditory imagery which we hear periodically in the background. There are the innumerable Italian bands that fill the air with their discordant sounds. There are the countless brooks and fountains plashing and bubbling from one scene to the next--sounds which carry psychological connotations. There are the strolling minstrels, church bells, organ-grinders, military bands, and, as always, the buzz of city life humming in the distance. These are the sounds which have an Italian flavor; the sounds Hawthorne uses intermittently in the novel to achieve the verisimilitude of an Italian setting.

Throughout the auditory imagery in Hawthorne's fiction, then, there is a pattern which emerges--a pattern which clearly indicates a relationship between a minor artistic device and a major thematic concern. And this relationship of image to theme illustrates Hawthorne's artistic concern for auditory detail. An artist, striving for perfection of expression, he brought all his senses into play--not the least of which was his

sense of sound. His genius lay in his ability to develop a limited number of sounds into a broad and colorful scope, suggesting that his auditory imagination was anything but weak.

Indeed, the types of auditory images Hawthorne uses--the sounds of nature, the sounds of cities, gothic sounds, the sounds of musical instruments, the sounds of bells, the sounds produced by the human voice, the sounds produced by human behavior, and the symphonic parallels he sometimes achieves in his fiction--demonstrate Hawthorne's world of sound. It is a world of sound Hawthorne uses to express a character's ability to harmonize with the universe.

Finally, in refining his basic equation of harmony and morality in the universe, Hawthorne is quite successful. He is an artist demonstrating repeatedly his prose craftsmanship. With the general background orchestration, with his gothic sound effects, with the particular sounds associated with character, and with the use of sound as a complement to sense, Hawthorne demonstrates his refinement of the auditory device and his images function with high effect. As a prose writer, he uses the auditory device to create and describe

dramatic and psychological overtones in his fiction. And he works within established conventions and draws upon them steadily and fully in his fiction to create atmosphere and convey meaning--no small feat for a man who always professed to have an unmusical ear.

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